

Oddballs

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When I was stationed in Mayport, Florida, I had a short practice putting green stretched out on the floor of my office. I kept about a half dozen balls on it with my putter. Sometimes, people would stick their heads in the door to chat, then would simply wander over and pick up the putter. Then they would simply bend over and putt a few of the balls down, trying to drop them into the correct hole.

However, one ball gave people a lot of problems. It was actually a trick ball that looked the same, but was weighted on the inside to keep it from rolling straight. As a result, when they would line up to hit this one, it would wobble and roll in a crooked line, finishing nowhere near where they intended.

Balls for all sports are balanced very precisely so that they are either true and will go in a straight line, or in some cases, have a natural curve built in. My wife used to have a bowling ball that was weighted so that when she threw it straight, it would curve to the left. On the outside it looked the same, but what made the difference was on the inside. The same was true of my trick golf ball. It looked like a normal ball on the outside, but inside, the center was slightly off and caused it to go in the wrong direction.

In the center of each of us is something that determines to a great degree in which direction we will go. Some of us have at our center certain values and standards that keep us true to center. We do not allow things on the outside to sway us or cause us to go off on a tangent. Others, however, have an inner force that sends them off in the wrong direction instead of keeping them on the straight and narrow path.

According to the Scriptures, we are born with a natural tendency to go off in the wrong direction. We call this a sinful nature. We all have it and it keeps us off of the right path. If we are aiming for godliness, it keeps us from achieving it. We are not able to hit the goal. The wonderful part is that we do not have to remain this way.

The Bible teaches us that if we recognize that we are sinners and repent, God will offer forgiveness. To repent involves more than just knowing we are sinners, or even being sorry for our sin. The word *repent* actually means to turn around or change direction. We literally change the direction of our lives and go a new way. The only way this can be accomplished is to have a new center, or heart, put in us. As a result of God's grace and forgiveness, He has arranged to have the debt paid for our sin. This allows us to have a heart for God placed within us. As we live in accordance with His guiding principles, our lives stay balanced and properly centered. This enables us to reach our intended objective, Heaven.

If your life is out of balance or you are heading in the wrong direction, let me show you how you can make the correction.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in Church on Sunday.